

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 25, 2009**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TESSIER
 O'CONNOR
 SHEEHAN
 BENTLEY
 KENNY
 MERLINO
 STRAINER

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:
 SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE &
 FISCAL SERVICES
NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK, BOARD OF
 SUPERVISORS
SUPERVISORS GOODSPEED
 TAYLOR
 THOMAS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SARAH MCLENITHAN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the Agenda to the Committee members. *A copy of the Agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the Agenda review, Ms. Weaver apprised that for the last two pay periods the DSS was averaging 65 hours of overtime, which she stated, was a decrease from the prior year. She noted that the average overtime per pay period for the year was 51.2 hours.

Ms. Weaver advised that she had spent 70% of her allocated funds for overtime as of the first pay period of September. She pointed out that \$73,000 had been spent in overtime expenses for the prior year; however, she said, she anticipated spending an estimated \$55,000 for this year, which was under budget. She stated that 64% of the funds budgeted for regular salaries had been expended for the year and none of the funds budgeted for part-time salaries had been expended.

With regards to mileage reimbursement, Ms. Weaver explained that this included education and conference expenses for staff members. She apprised that she anticipated the total mileage reimbursement expense for the year would be \$65,000, which was the lowest it had been since 1999. Mr. Merlino commended Ms. Weaver for keeping the Committee apprised of her expenditures, as he felt that every Department should provide this information to their Committee to ensure that more accurate budgets could be prepared the following year.

Mr. Merlino asked if there was a mandated eligibility criteria for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively. She stated that since the decline in the economy there had been an increase in the number of TANF applications, which she felt would not be decreasing in the near future. Ms. Weaver apprised that in August, 182 individuals had applied for TANF in comparison to 161 individuals that had applied in August of the prior year, which was a 13% increase. She explained that due to the State increasing eligibility requirements, the numbers of individuals eligible to receive TANF had increased.

Mr. Merlino pointed out that this created problems for developing an accurate budget for the following year, as there was no way to predict how much money would be expended annually for TANF. Mr. Tessier apprised that the issue arose from budget reductions being instituted at the beginning of the year, which caused insufficient funds to be available to cover the cost of the TANF program through the end of the year.

With regards to the resignation of the Support Investigator, Ms. Weaver inquired whether she had to request to abolish the position and create a part-time Administrative Assistant position to be shared between the DSS and the Youth Bureau, as the change would not go into effect until January 1, 2010. Mr. Kenny reminded the Committee that the Budget Committee had determined that the Youth Bureau would be decreased from two employees to one employee. He commented that there was no point in having a Budget Committee if their recommendations were not enforced.

Ms. Weaver countered that there would be a savings to the County, because she was deleting a full-time position and creating a part-time position. Mr. Payne noted that the portion of the position that was supervised by the DSS was partially reimbursed through Federal and State grant funding.

Mr. Kenny advised that he did not have an issue with the changes that were being made, but rather with the fact that because the position was being changed from a part-time position to a full-time position there would be no savings with regards to benefits. Chairman Monroe apprised that Margaret Smith, Director of the Youth Bureau, had informed him of the proposed changes and he had advised her that he felt she was moving in the right direction; however, he stated, it was necessary for her to get the proper approval from Ms. Weaver, the Social Services and Human Services Committee prior to instituting the changes.

Discussion ensued.

Pursuant to further discussion on the matter it was determined that no action was necessary at this time, as the proposed changes would be handled during the budget process.

Ms. Weaver requested permission to temporarily fill the part-time position of Van Driver, from September 28, 2009 through December 18, 2009, due to a leave of absence.

It was the consensus of the Committee to allow Ms. Weaver to fill the part-time position of Van

Driver as outlined above.

Ms. Weaver requested permission to fill the vacant position of Van Driver, base salary of \$22,987, Employee No. 10643, due to resignation, effective November 18, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Van Driver as outlined above and forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Request to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Payne apprised that it was necessary to hire a van driver to transport individuals to the methadone clinic. He stated that the Sheriff's Department had informed him that they had a van available to use for the transports; however, he stated, it was necessary to make alterations to the van to ensure the safety of the driver.

Mr. Kenny queried whether the methadone treatments could be administered by the Corrections Facility Registered Nurse (RN), which would save on transportation costs and Ms. Weaver replied in the negative. Ms. Weaver explained the Corrections Facility did not necessarily have incarcerated individuals that required methadone treatments; therefore, the RN picked up the methadone on an "as needed" basis. Ms. Weaver stated that she had sought guidance from the State on the matter; however, she noted, she had not received a reply.

Mr. Tessier suggested inquiring whether any retired Law Enforcement individuals would be interested in driving the van, as they were already being utilized for prisoner transports by the Sheriff's Department.

Discussion ensued.

Pursuant to further discussion on the matter it was determined that no action would be taken until Ms. Weaver received further guidance on the matter from the State.

Ms. Weaver apprised that for two semesters the DSS would have an intern through Adirondack Community College (ACC) working in Preventive Services.

Ms. Weaver requested permission to transfer funds from Code A.6100 470, MMIS to various codes in the amount of \$175,150.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the request for transfer of funds as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested permission to amend the 2009 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$277,150 to cover shortfalls.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2009 County budget as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request to Amend the County Budget is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver informed the Committee that the State would no longer be providing reimbursement for Food Stamp Administration. She said that for the first six months of the year the cost of Food Stamp Administration had been \$251,247 and she noted, it would cost counties throughout the State a minimum of \$250 million to administer the program for the year.

Chairman Monroe suggested informing the State that the County would no longer offer the Food Stamp Program if the State did not supply the necessary funds because the County could not afford to incur the additional cost and Mr. Merlino concurred. Mr. Tessier stated that the State would tell the County to raise their taxes to fund the program, as the State mandated that the County supply Food Stamps to individuals who met the criteria for eligibility.

Ms. Weaver interjected that she had made Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward aware of the impact this cost would have on Warren County; however, she stated, she was unsure if any action would be taken on the matter. Mr. O'Connor apprised that it was necessary for all of the counties within the State to object to all of the additional costs that the State was passing on to the counties due to mandated programs.

Ms. Weaver apprised that the State was considering changing the regulations with regards to Youth Bureau mergers. She said that this was due to several Youth Bureau Offices throughout the State merging with the DSS.

Relative to caseload trigger, Ms. Weaver advised that the DSS may receive Federal Stimulus funds due to an 80% increase in caseloads.

Ms. Weaver requested an executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 11:22 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The Committee reconvened and Mr. Tessier announced that no action was necessary pursuant to the executive session.

Ms. Weaver presented a Power Point Presentation to the Committee on the proposed Reorganizational Plan for Warren County DSS. She pointed out that the proposed changes would have a cost savings to the County of approximately \$88,000 to \$108,000. She explained that the staff members in positions that were eliminated had the option to take a position with a lower grade

salary. She explained that there was at least a \$3,000 savings with every abolishment.

Chairman Monroe questioned what the savings to the State would be and Ms. Weaver responded that the savings would be approximately \$342,492. Mr. Goodspeed suggested that the DSS Legal Department eliminate one Attorney position and the remainder be supervised by the County Attorney. Ms. Weaver interjected that at the last Committee meeting it had been approved that the County Attorney would be supervising the DSS Legal staff. Amy Bartlett, First Assistant County Attorney, apprised that she was currently working part-time in the DSS in connection with child support. She stated that she would be unable to complete the necessary work required of her without the assistance from another Attorney, as the caseload was quite large.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to adopt the revised Table of Organization within the DSS and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Reorganizational Plan for Warren County Social Services is on file with the minutes.*

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Kenny, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McLenithan
Legislative Office Specialist